Willow Award

EXCELLENCE IN END-OF-LIFE CARE

October 2023

To: Smith Family Funeral Homes

RE: Nomination Letter for Willow Award

We can not think of anyone more deserving of this honor than Chris Straschinske for her dedication and selflessness.

Chris took on the role of caring for our niece, Cass in her hour of need without hesitation. This was a horrific tragedy that most of us hear about on the news never expecting it to be your family or co-worker.

We met Chris when we arrived in Arkansas. She took time by explaining her role in these extreme circumstances and what life was like for Cass and her son. We soon learned that Chris was more than a compassionate co-worker and friend, but was more like a mother figure to our niece.

Most would feel lost in this chaotic scenario, but this was the world they shared. Unfortunately, 911 does not stop for anything or a coworker. She made sure that Cass was allowed to continue doing her job saving lives this time as an organ donor. Chris not only stepped up to the challenge she crushed it!

We hope you will consider our nomination.

Thank you,

The Family of Cassandra Frederickson Peña-Romero